What is this New Book of

BISHOP COLENSO'S

Against the Bible?

What are the Bishop's Objections?

Have they been answered?

Or can they be answered?

"To Natal, where savage men so
Err in faith and badly live,
Forth from England went Colenso,
To the heathen light to give.

But, behold the issue awful!
Christian, vanquished by Zulu,
Says polygamy is lawful,
And the Bible isn't true!"

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The Bishop's resignation as to consequences.

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WHAT IS

BISHOP COLENSO'S NEW BOOK?

AND

WHO IS BISHOP COLENSO?

Who is Bishop Colenso? The Right Rev. John William Colenso, D. D., is the Bishop of Natal, which is a colonial possession of Great Britain, on the South East coast of Africa, and has an area of 18,000 square miles. The Bishop is the son of a gentleman long connected with the duchy of Cornwall. He was born in 1814; he finished his education at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he graduated as second wrangler, and Smith's prizeman, in 1836, subsequently becoming fellow of his college. He was assistant-master of Harrow School from 1838 to 1842; Tutor of St. John's College, from 1842 to 1846; and Rector of Forncett, St. Mary, Norfolk, from 1846 to 1854, when he was appointed first Bishop of Natal, South Africa. The Bishop is an author of great repute. His treatises on algebra and arithmetic, the first published in 1849, the second in 1853, have had a very large sale, and are text-books in schools and universities. Besides these two standard works, his lordship is the author of "Miscellaneous Examples in Algebra," (1848) "Plane Trigonometry," (1851) "Village Sermons," (1853), an edition of the Communion Service, with selections from the writings of the Rev. F. D. Maurice," (1855), "Ten Weeks in Natal," (1855), also "A Translation of the Epistle to the Romans, commented on from a missionary point of view," (1861). It is evident, therefore, that the Bishop is a scholar, and not a mere enthusiast or declaimer; and that his opinions and statements are worthy of and demand thoughtful examination.

How the Bishop's book has been received. Long before it was published the religious world received the intimation of its advent, and a privileged few had the opportunity of reading it; its author being anxious to submit it to the consideration of competent critics, some of whom, so it is reported, advised its non-publication on the sole ground of the disturbance which it must of necessity make in received opinions. The Rev. Canon Stowel, at a bible meeting, thus referred to Bishop Colenso and his book:—"He had a certain respect for open infidelity; but he complained most of all of the infidelity that was dishonest. Don't wear the surplice and robe of Christianity, and yet betray the book. What right has a man to preach, if he does not

preach the Gospel; or if he does not believe it to be the very Gospel? The use that is made of science at present in certain quarters is utterly unlike the use that was made of it by Newton, the prince of science; by Locke, and Bacon. They were men who bowed at the throne of revelation, and felt that nature, rightly understood, was in harmony with the word of God, but now-a-days the study of many scientific men seems to be to discover discord and not harmony, and to find in science, not the handmaid of revelation, but the antagonist. The question of a simple heathen shakes the confidence of an English Bishop. Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in Ascalon! Surely it has not come to that. Are we to send out missionaries to evangelise the heathen, and be themselves heathenised, as it were, instead of making converts? I trust that that book will never make its appearance in its full form, but, ashamed of itself ere it is born, sneak back into the obscurity whence it comes. But if ever it be flung in the face of the English Church, we shall say with indignation that such a man ought neither to be bishop, presbyter, nor deacon." And the Bishop of Manchester said at the same meeting:—"With reference to the objections now brought against the Scripture, he was convinced, from long and patient and prayerful examination, that there was as little of originality as of honesty about them. There was not one that had not been again and again repeated and refuted."

The name of the Bishop's Book. "The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined, part the first, the Pentateuch examined as an Historical Narrative," by the Right Rev. John William Colenso, D.D., Bishop of Natal.

The right of the Bishop to critically examine the Scriptures. The ruling of the Court of Arches, in the cases of Dr. Williams and the Rev. H. B. Wilson amounted to the declaration that there was nothing in the codes of the church which forbade the free and unbiassed application of the principles of right reason to the text of the sacred volume. Had the judgment been otherwise, so Bishop Colenso declares, he should still have felt it to be his duty to make public the results of his conscientious study. As it is, the judgment of the Court of Arches must be reversed before the Bishop Colenso can be expelled his office. On this subject, which is one that will receive no small amount of attention, the author of the book in question says:—"I am not conscious of having written anything to contravene Dr. Lushington's decision. Should it be otherwise, and should the strange phenomenon be witnessed of a Bishop of the Protestant Church of England, more especially one who has been expressly occupied in translating the Scriptures into a foreign tongue, being precluded by the law of that Church from entering upon a close critical examination of them, and from bringing before the great body of the Church (not the clergy only, but the clergy and laity) the plain, honest results of such criticism, I must, of course, bear the consequences of my act. But meanwhile, I cannot but believe that our Church, representing as it is supposed to do, the religious feeling of a free Protestant nation, requires

us now, as in the days of the Reformation, to protest against all perversion of the truth, and all suppression of it for the sake of peace, or by mere authority. As a Bishop of that Church, I dissent entirely from the principle laid down by some, that such a question as that which is here discussed is not even an open question for an English clergyman—that we are bound by solemn obligations to maintain certain views on the points here involved, to our live's end, or at least to resign our sacred office in the Church as soon as ever we feel it impossible any longer to hold them."

The Bishop's belief. The Bishop's purpose was to examine the "Five Books" as an historical narrative, and to measure its credibility and consistency. If it should be found wanting in credibility and consistency then the dogma of absolute inspiration, as some have maintained for every word in the Scriptures, is exploded. History is something other than morals or religion. Those who maintain the absolute inspiration doctrine, should be prepared to prove that the text does not contradict itself on matters of fact. The Bishop, however, as the result of his investigations, has arrived at the conviction that the text *does* contradict itself. He says:—

I have arrived at the conviction—as painful to myself at first as it may be to my reader, though painful now no longer under the clear shining of the light of truth—that the Pentateuch, as a whole, cannot possibly have been written by Moses, or by any one acquainted personally with the facts which it professes to describe; and, further, that the (so-called) Mosaic narrative, by whomsoever written, and though imparting to us, as I fully believe it does, revelations of the Divine will and character, cannot be regarded as historically true.

Objections of this nature are not now made for the first time, and only in consequence of the character of the objector do they court examination. Dr. Colenso confesses that at his ordination and consecration he only gave his adhesion but not his attention to the Mosaic writing. His critical examination was the result of his leisure in Natal, prompted doubtless by the work which he had undertaken in the translation of the Scriptures into Zulu, and more immediately by the questionings of his Lordship's Zulu assistant. It must be admitted both by constitution and training that he of all men is capacitated for the work he has undertaken. His mathematical training renders him dispassionate and inpartial; as his nine years patient labour in an uncongenial sphere renders him above suspicion. His character as an aimiable and devout Christian will secure for his volume an interest and sympathy which would not otherwise be accorded to it. It is not the less true, however, that the objections have been noticed by previous critics, amongst whom Kurtz, Hengstenberg, and Hävsruick; Ewald, De Wette, Bleek, Ruenen, Stanley, Newman, and Davidson are not the least.

The Bishop's reasons for becoming a Sceptic. As we have stated

during the Bishop's course of study while in England, he gave his adhesion to the form of belief prescribed by the Church without critical examination of the books which he received as inspired; but when engaged with his Zulu assistants in translating the Bible, he found himself considerably posed with the questions that occurred to them as the work proceeded, which caused him to institute the severe critical examination which has resulted in the book in question:

"Engrossed with parochial and other work in England, Says the Bishop, I did what, probably, many other clergymen have done under similar circumstances,—I contented myself with silencing, by means of the specious explanations which are given in most commentaries, the ordinary objections against the historical character of the early portions of the Old Testament, and settled down into a willing acquiescence in the general truth of the narrative, whatever difficulties might still hang about particular parts of it. In short, the doctrinal and devotional portions of the Bible were what were needed most in parochial duty. And, if a passage of the Old Testament formed at any time the subject of a sermon, it was easy to draw from it practical lessons of daily life, without examining closely into the historical truth of the narrative. It is true, there were one or two stories, which presented great difficulties, too prominent not to be noticed, and which were brought every now and then before us in the lessons of the Church, such *e. g.* as the account of the creation and the deluge. But on the whole, I found so much of Divine light and life in these and other parts of the sacred book, so much wherewith to feed my own soul and the souls of others, that I was content to take all this for granted, as being true in the main, however wonderful, and as being at least capable, in an extreme case, of *some* sufficient explanation. Here, however, as I have said, amidst my work in this land I have been brought face to face with the very questions which I then put by. While translating the story of the Flood, I have had a simple-minded, but intelligent, native—one with the docility of a child, but the reasoning powers of mature age—looked up, and asked, "Is all that true? Do you really believe that all this happened thus—that all the beasts, and birds, and creeping things, upon the earth, large and small, from hot countries and from cold, came thus by pairs, and entered into the ark with Noah? And did Noah gather food for them *all*, for the beasts and birds of prey as well as the rest?" My heart answered in the words of the prophet, "Shall a man speak lies in the name of the Lord?" Zech. xiii, 3. I dared not do so. My own knowledge of some branches of science, of geology in particular, had been much increased since I left England; and I now knew for certain, on geological grounds, a fact, of which I had only had misgivings before, viz., that a *Universal* Deluge, such as the Bible manifestly speaks of, could not possibly have taken place in the way described in the Book of Genesis, not to mention other difficulties which the story contains."

Much of the Zulu difficulty would have been got quit of if the Bishop had considered the wording of the text. "And of every living

creature of all flesh, thou shalt bring two of a *sort* into the ark that they may live with thee ; of the male sex, and of the female. Of fowls, according to their *kind*, and of beasts, in their *kind*, and of everything that creepeth on the earth, according to its *kind* ; two of every *sort* shall go in with thee that they may live." (Gen. vi, 19, 20). How are the words *sort* and *kind* to be interpreted ? If by *variety*, the number would be too extensive ; if by family too limited. The best interpretation, perhaps, is that pairs of each *germs* of wild animals, and pairs of each *species* of domestic animals, were preserved in the ark. This admitted, then it can be easily accounted for that there are fossils of the wolf, fox, racoon, genette, squirrel, pelican, tortoise, crocodile, *all of extinct species of existing families*, a proof that whole species perished and that pairs were only saved. One writer says on this subject of the difficulties which the Deluge presents to Dr. Colenso, that: " We seek not the order of nature in the circumstances of this interesting narrative, (of the Deluge) and, consequently, do not attempt to explain, by arguments drawn from natural causes, what must be inexplicable, save by the Divine interposition."

The Bishop's difficulty with reference to the Deluge. " I refer," says the Bishop, " especially to the circumstance, well known to all geologists (see Lyell's ' Elementary Geology,' pp. 197, 198), that volcanic hills exist of immense extent in Auvergne and Languedoc, which must have been formed ages before the Noachian Deluge, and which are covered with light and loose substances, pumice-stone, &c., that must have been swept away by a Flood but do not exhibit the slightest sign of having ever been disturbed. Of course, I am well aware that some have attempted to show that Noah's Deluge was only a *partial* one. But such attempts have ever seemed to me to be made in the very teeth of the Scripture statements, which are as plain and explicit as words can possibly be. Nor is anything really gained by supposing the Deluge to have been partial. For, as waters must find their own level on the Earth's surface without a special miracle, of which the Bible says nothing, a Flood, which should begin by covering the top of Ararat (if that were conceivable), or a much lower mountain, must necessarily become universal, and in due time sweep over the hills of Auvergne. Knowing this, I felt that I dared not, as a servant of the God of Truth, urge my brother man to believe that which I did not myself believe, which I knew to be untrue, as a matter-of-fact, historical, narrative. I gave him, however, such a reply as satisfied him for the time, without throwing any discredit upon the general veracity of the Bible history."

The Bishop when he penned this passage, must have been considering Dr. Buckland, who gives it as his opinion that the Deluge was " a violent and transient rush of waters, which tore up the soil to a great depth, excavated valleys, gave rise to immense beds of shingle, and carried fragments of rock and gravel from one point to another, and, during its advance and retreat, strewed the valleys, and even the tops of many hills, with alluvium.". Lyell, on the contrary, says that there

are no terms employed in the narrative of Moses that indictae the impetuous rushing of waters, either as they rose or as they retreated. The olive-branch brought back by the dove seems as clear an indication to us that the vegetation was not destroyed, as it was then to Noah that the dry land was about to appear. For my own part, I have always considered the flood, when its universality, in the strictest sense of the term, is insisted on, as a preternatural event, far beyond the reach of philosophical inquiry, whether as to the causes employed to produce it, or the effects most likely to result from it."

The Bishop prosecuting his enquiries. "The result of my inquiry is this," writes the Bishop, "that I have arrived at the conviction,—as painful to myself at first, as it may be to my reader, though painful now no longer under the clear shining of the light of truth,—that the Pentateuch, as a whole, cannot possibly have been written by Moses, or by any one acquainted personally with the facts which it professes to describe, and, further, that the (so-called) Mosaic narrative, by whomsoever written, and though imparting to us, as I fully believe it does, revelations of the divine will and character, cannot be regarded as *historically true.* Let it be observed that I am not here speaking of a number of petty variations and contradictions, such as, on closer examination, are found to exist throughout the books, but which may be in many cases sufficiently explained, by alleging our ignorance of all the circumstances of the case, or by supposing some misplacement, or loss, or corruption, of the original manuscript, or by suggesting that a later writer has inserted his own gloss here or there, or even whole passages, which may contain facts or expressions at variance with the true Mosaic books, and throwing unmerited suspicion upon them. However perplexing such contradictions are, when found in a book which is believed to be divinely infallible, yet a humble and pious faith will gladly welcome the aid of a friendly criticism, to relieve it in this way of its doubts. I can truly say that I would do so heartily myself. Nor are the difficulties, to which I am now referring, of the same kind as those, which arise from considering the accounts of the Creation and the Deluge, (though these of themselves are very formidable), or the stupendous character of certain miracles, as that of the sun and moon standing still,—or the waters of the river Jordan standing in heaps as solid walls, while the stream, we must suppose, was still running,—or the ass speaking with human voice,—or the miracles wrought by the magicians of Egypt, such as the conversion of a rod into a snake, and the latter being endowed with life. They are not such even, as are raised, when we regard the trivial nature of a vast number of conversations and commands, ascribed directly to Jehovah, especially the multiplied ceremonial minutiæ, laid down in the Levitical Law. They are not such, even, as must be started at once in most pious minds, when such words as these are read, professedly coming from the Holy and Blessed One, the Father and "Faithful Creator" of all mankind: "If the master (of a Hebrew servant) have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, *the wife and her children shall be*

her master's, and he shall go out free by himself," E. xxi. 4: the wife and children in such a case being placed under the protection of such other words as these, "If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. *Notwithstanding*, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: *for he is his money*." E. xxi. 20, 21.—I shall never forget the revulsion of feeling, with which a very intelligent Christian native, with whose help I was translating these words into the Zulu tongue, first heard them as words said to be uttered by the same great and gracious Being whom I was teaching him to trust in and adore. His whole soul revolted against the notion, that the Great and Blessed God, the Merciful Father of all mankind, would speak of a servant or maid as mere "money," and allow a horrible crime to go unpunished, because the victim of the brutal usage had survived a few hours. My own heart and conscience at the time fully sympathised with his. But I then clung to the notion, that the main substance of the narrative was historically true. And I relieved his difficulty and my own for the present by telling him, that I supposed that such words as these were written down by Moses, and believed by him to have been divinely given to him, because the thought of them arose in his heart, as he conceived, by the inspiration of God, and that hence to all such laws he prefixed the formula, "Jehovah said unto Moses," without it being on that account necessary for us to suppose that they were actually spoken by the Almighty. This was, however, a very great strain upon the cord which bound me to the ordinary belief in the historical veraçity of the Pentateuch; and since then that cord has snapped in twain altogether. But I wish to repeat here most distinctly that my reason for no longer receiving the Pentateuch as historically true, is not that I find insuperable difficulties with regard to the *miracles* or supernatural *revelations* of Almighty God, recorded in it, but solely that I cannot, as a true man, consent any longer to shut my eyes to the absolute, palpable self-contradictions of the narrative."

Bellamy writing on the subject of the statement that Moses could not be the writer of the Pentateuch, says: that objectors "think it unquestionable evidence, that because a book, according to the present division of the chapters, bears the name of a person, the whole of the book must have been written by him. This arises from ignorance. For example: the books of Samuel were not written by Samuel, for at the beginning of the xxv. Chapter of the 1st Book, it is said, *And Samuel died*; and consequently the latter part of the 1st Book, and the whole of the 2nd Book, could not be written by Samuel."

The Bishop's method of examination. Dr. Colen o in his examinations, has the fairness to present the opinions of those scholars who have made the controverted questions the subject of enquiry. The statement, for instance, that sixty-six persons "out of the loins of Jacob," (Gen. xlvi 12.) went down with him to Egypt is argued to be only possible of Judah, who was 42 years of age at the migration to Egypt, had at that time for great-grandchildren Herrun and Hamul. This

being incredible, Kurtz and Hengstenberg suggests that those "still in the loins" of their progenitors were included in the estimate: an ingenious escape, if only the daughters and all the other descendants were not capriciously omitted.

The Bishop Hypercritical. Dr. Colenso in arguing against the text: "The assembly was gathered to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation," calls to his aid his familiar mathematics, he cites the fact that the width of the Tabernacle was only 18 feet, and allowing, two feet to each man, just nine men could have stood in front of it. Supposing then, that all the adult males, numbering as we are told 600,000, had obeyed the Divine summons, and taken their places side by side in front not of the door merely, but of the whole end of the Tabernacle, they would have reached, allowing a distance of 18 inches between each rank, 100,000 feet, or nearly 20 miles. The Bishop further calculates that the whole area of the court of the Tabernacle was but 1,692 square yards. This could at most have packed, he thinks, but 5,000 people, whereas the able-bodied only of the congregation are set at 2,600,000. The Bishop's oversight in this instance may be that he assumes that *all* the congregation were to be gathered in the court and to stand at the door of the Tabernacle.

The Bishop finds difficulties in the size of the Camp and in the duties of the Priest:—

"Thus the refuse of these sacrifices, writes Dr. Colenso, would have had to be carried by the priest himself (Aaron, Eleazar, or Ithmar —there were no others), a distance of three quarters of a mile. From the outside of this great camp, wood and water would have had to be fetched for all purposes, if, indeed, such supplies of wood and water, for the wants of such a multitude as this, could have been found at all in the wilderness, under Sinai, for instance, where they are said to have encamped for nearly twelve months together. How much wood would remain in such a neighbourhood, after a month's consumption in the city of London, even at midsummer? And the "ashes" of the whole camp, with the rubbish and filth of every kind, for a population like that of London, would have had to be carried out in like manner, through the midst of the crowded mass of the people. They could not surely all have gone outside the camp for the necessities of nature, as commanded in D. xxii, 12-14. Tkere were aged and infirm, women in childbirth, sick persons, and young children, who could not have done this. And, indeed, the command itself supposes the person to have a "paddle" upon his "weapon," and, therefore, must be understood to apply only to the *males*, or, rather, only to the 600,000 *warriors*. But the very fact that this direction for ensuring cleanliness—"for Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp; therefore shall thy camp be holy; that he see no unclean thing in thee"—would have been so limited in its application, is itself a very convincing proof of the unhistorical character of the whole narrative.

But how huge does this difficulty become, if, instead of taking the excessively cramped area of 1,652 acres, less than *three square miles*, for such a camp as this, we take the more reasonable allowance of Scott, who says, "this encampment is computed to have formed a moveable city of *twelve miles square*," that is, about the size of London itself—as it might well be, considering that the population was as large as that of London, and that in the Hebrew tents there were no first, second, third, and fourth storeys, no crowded garrets and underground cellars. In that case, the offal of these sacrifices would have had to be carried by Aaron himself, or one of his sons, a distance of six miles; and the same difficulty would have attended each of the other transactions above-mentioned. In fact we have to imagine the priest having himself to carry, on his back on foot, from St. Paul's to the outskirts of the metropolis, the 'skin, and flesh, and head, and legs, and inwards, and dung, even the whole bullock," and the people having to carry out their rubbish in like manner, and bring in their daily supplies of water and fuel, after first cutting down the latter where they could find it! Further we have to imagine half a million of men going out daily—the 22,000 Levites for a distance of six miles—to the suburbs for the common necessities of nature! The supposition, involves, of course, an absurdity. But it is our duty to look plain facts in the face."

The Bishop finds difficulties in the Exodus. "The total of adult males, 603,550, is just the same at the first census as at that held six months subsequently—such a number obliges us to set the whole nation at not less than 2,500,000, or, at the lowest, 2,000,000 souls. These must have carried 200,000 tents, requiring 50,000 oxen, as well as grain and forage enough for a month, since for that time they dwelt in the wilderness, and had no manna given them. We are told also that this great host marched out in a day; and the Hebrew adjective applied to it has been variously constructed as "harnessed," or "five in a rank." It seems strange enough that a servile tribe should have been permitted by Pharoah to leave the land in array of battle; while in files of five their column would have been *sixty-eight miles* long, taking at least three days to mass at Succoth."

The Bishop finds difficulties in the "first-born males." We read that "the first-born males, from a month old and upwards, were numbered and found to be" 22,273. As there must have been 900,000 males altogether in such a camp, and as these first-born were "matricis apertores," *i. e.*, eldest-born on the mothers' side, there is only left the conclusion that each Hebrew mother, on an average, had forty-two sons. Dr. Colenso concedes that there might have been "boys and girls"—an abnormal family party even then. Hävernick takes refuge, indeed, with Michaelis in supposing a very general condition of polygamy; but this is properly rejected by Kurtz as unwarranted. Easier in faith, if less philosophical, Bishop Patrick gets over the difficulty by quietly supposing that "by the blessing of God the Hebrew women

brought forth *six children* at a birth." We are told, indeed, that at a certain interesting period the "Hebrew women were not like the Egyptian." If anything of this sort were ordinary in an Israelitish household, there was a difference, indeed; and not only between the Jewish women and their sisters of Misraim, but between them and any other women in the known world. Dr. Patrick should have plunged further into the mysteries of the nursery, and informed his opponents what provision was made for these "sextets." A difficulty at once arises in connection with the maternal function of lactation. Had the Right Rev. prelate in his mind's eye a vision of Hebrew mothers with rows of mammæ like those of Ashtorath or the Indian Luxumee; or did he not care to pursue his theory to its issue, content to leave the little "farrow" where he had placed them, on the lap of the embarrassed parent? That the figures of this part of the Pentateuch are hopeless is the conclusion of Dr. Colenso.

The Bishop finds difficulties in the Passover. As grave a difficulty is presented to his mind by the account of the institution of the Passover. Again, he has to believe that a community, certainly large, and said to be thus enormous, could be summoned abruptly and in one night to the celebration of a rite, the due performance of which could alone obviate destruction. The lowest estimate of the lambs required for the feast must be 150,000, which renders necessary a yearly flock of 2,000,000 sheep, with 400,000 acres of good pasturage. The same celebration recurring annually, where, he asks, could the sacrificial victims be found, and whence could the flock be pastured, in the wild wadies and granite rocks about Sinai and the Red Sea? And here arises that perplexing question as to the mode of life of such a vast nomadic horde "for forty years long" in the wilderness. Those who have seen the ground of these drear wanderings can answer for the truth of Canon Stanley's description:

"We were, undoubtedly (he writes), on the track of the Israelites, by Marah, and the two valleys, one of which must almost certainly—both perhaps—be Elim. For the most part the desert was absolutely bare. But the two rivals for Elim are fringed with trees and shrubs, the first vegetation we have met in the desert. First, there are the wild palms, successors of the "three-score and ten," not like those of Egypt or of pictures, but either dwarf, that is, truckless, or else with savage, hairy trunks, and branches all dishevelled. Then there are the feathery tamarisks, here assuming gnarled boughs and hoary heads, on whose leaves is found what the Arabs call manna. Thirdly, there is the wild acacia, but this is also tangled by its desert growth into a thicket—the tree of the burning bush and the shittim wood of the Tabernacle. A stair of rock brought us into a wady, enclosed between red granite mountains. I cannot too often repeat that these wadies are exactly like rivers, except in having no water; and it is this appearance of torrent-bed and banks, and clefts in the rocks for tributary streams, and at times even rushes and shrubs fringing their course,

which gives to the whole wilderness a doubly dry and thirsty aspect—signs of "Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink."

Such is the wilderness, where miracles were naturally "indicated" to sustain the Israelites. But quails, Dr. Colenso thinks, did not feed the flocks which furnish 200,000 male lambs per year; nor would manna sustain the cattle which bore so many tents and equipages. It is either all, he would say, a miracle from beginning to end, and the narrative need no more have stooped to arithmetic than the story-teller who enumerates the number of the army of Cambuscan, and the virtues of "the ring of brass;" or it is simply a history of mythical and sub-mythical times, and therefore not free from the faults of *post-factum* compilations. On either theory it appears to Dr Colenso that breath is wasted in maintaining the "absolute inspiration" of such statements as that 2,000,000 sheep and oxen could be fed in the few and insignificant wadies which a drove of a hundred short-horns would trample into grit in an hour, seeking their sparse herbage.

The Bishop is instructed by a Natal sheepmaster. On the evening of the day on which the order was given to keep the Passover, each household was to take a lamb, kill it, and eat it. If the household were too small for one lamb, two households might join. Josephus reckons ten persons on an average for each lamb. Taking ten as the number, 200,000 lambs would be required. Taking twenty persons, 100,000 lambs. Taking the mean, 150,000. In all, 300,000. These were all to be male lambs of the first year. There were, therefore, as many females, in all 300,000 lambs. But it is clear that all the male lambs of the year were not killed, or there would have been no wethers left for the increase of the flock. Instead of 150,000 then, let us take 200,000 of each, male and female—total 400,000 lambs of the first year. A natal sheepmaster informs the Bishop that the total number of sheep, in an average flock of all ages, will be about *five times* that of the increase in one season of lambing. Hence 400,000 lambs of the first year implies a flock of 2,000,000 sheep. The Israelites had also large herds, "even very much cattle." Allowing five sheep to an acre, the Israelites would have required 400,000 acres of grazing land, "larger than the whole of Hertfordshire or Bedfordshire, and more than twice the size of Middlesex.

The Bishop finds difficulties with the sudden marching of the Israelites. "It appears," he writes, "from the N.I., 3, ii. 32, that these six hundred thousand were the men in the prime of life, "from twenty years old and upwards, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel." And (as we have seen) this large number of able-bodied warriors implies a total population of, at least, two millions. Here then we have this vast body of people of all ages, summoned to start, according to the story, at a moment's notice, and actually started, not one being left behind, together with all their multitudinous flocks and herds which must have been spread out over a district as large as a good-sized English county. Remembering, as I do, the confusion in my own small

household of thirty or forty persons, when once we were obliged to fly at dead of night,—having been roused from our beds with a false alarm, that an invading Zulu force had entered the colony, had evaded the English troops sent to meet them, and was making its way direct from our station, killing right and left as it came along,—I do not hesitate to declare this statement to be utterly incredible and impossible. Were an English village of (say) two thousand people to be called suddenly to set out in this way, with old people, young children, and infants, what indescribable distress there would be! But what shall be said of a thousand times as many? And what of the sick and infirm, or the women in recent or imminent childbirth, in a population like that of London, where the births are 264 a day, or *about one every five minutes*! But this is but a very small part of the difficulty. We are required to believe that, in one single day, the order to start was communicated suddenly, at midnight, to every single family of every town and village, throughout a tract of country as large as Hertfordshire, but ten times as thickly peopled;—that, in obedience to such order, having first "borrowed" very largely from their Egyptian neighbours in all directions (though, if we are to suppose Egyptians occupying the *same* territory with the Hebrews, the extent of it must be very much increased), they then came in from all parts of the land of Goshen to Rameses, bringing with them the sick and infirm, the young and the aged;—further, that, since receiving the summons, they had sent out to gather in all their flocks and herds, spread over so wide a district, and had driven them also to Rameses;—and lastly, that having done all this, since they were roused at midnight, they were started again from Rameses that very same day, and marched on to Succoth, not leaving a single sick or infirm person, a single woman in childbirth, or even a "single hoof," Ex. x, 26, behind them!"

The Bishop finds difficulties with the mothers of the children of the Israelites. The numbers of the firstborn males is stated, Num, iii, 43, to have been 22,273. If there were 600,000 males of twenty years and upwards, the whole number of males may be reckoned at 900,000, which would give one first-born to every forty-four males, that is, the number of males in each family must have been forty-four. Referring to the explanations offered by Kurtz, Dr. Colenso says:—"There is, indeed, one point, though he has not noticed it, which might help slightly to diminish it. In some families the firstborn may have died before the numbering; some, too, who were born about the time of the birth of Moses, may have been killed by the order of Pharoah. And, if all those who may have thus died be reckoned with the 22,273, the proportion of the remaining males, to be placed under each of the first-born, will be somewhat altered. Still we cannot suppose any unusual mortality of this kind, without checking in the same degree the increase of the people. Let us, however, reckon that one out of four first-borns died, so that instead of 44,546 first-borns, male and female, there would have been, if all had lived, about 60,000. But even this number of first-borns, for a population of 1,800,000, would imply that each

mother had, on the average, thirty children, fifteen sons and fifteen daughters. Besides which, the number of *mothers* must have been the same as that of the *first-borns*, male and female, including also any that had died. Hence there would have been only 60,000 child-bearing women to 600,000 men, so that only about one man in ten had a wife or children!

The Bishop finds consolation in his statement that the Pentateuch "cannot be regarded as historically true." "But how thankful we must be, writes the Bishop that we are no longer obliged to believe, as a matter of fact, of vital consequence to our eternal hope, the story related in N. xxxi., where we are told that a force of 12,000 Israelites slew *all* the males of the Midianites, took captive *all* the females and children, seized *all* their cattle and flocks (72,000 oxen, 61,000 asses, 675,000 sheep), and *all* their goods, and burnt *all* their cities, and *all* their goodly castles, without the loss of a single man—and then, by command of Moses, butchered in cold blood all the women and children, "except all the women-children, who have not known a man by lying with him." These last the Israelites were to "keep for themselves." They amounted we are told, to 32,000, *v.* 35, mostly, we must suppose, under the age of sixteen or eighteen. We may fairly reckon that there were as many more under the age of forty, and half as many more above forty, making altogether 80,000 females, of whom according to the story, Moses ordered 48,000 to be killed, besides (say) 20,000 young boys. The tragedy of Cawnpore, where 300 were butchered, would sink into nothing, compared with such a massacre, if, indeed, we were required to believe it. And these 48,000 females must have represented 48,000 men, all of whom, in that case, we must also believe to have been killed, their property pillaged, their castles demolished, and towns destroyed, by 12,000 Israelites, who, in addition, must have carried off 100,000 captives (more than eight persons to each man), and driven before them 808,000 head of cattle (more than sixty-seven for each man), and all without the loss of a single man! How is it possible to quote the Bible as in any way condemning slavery, when we read here, v. 40, of "Jehovah's tribute" of slaves, thirty-two persons?"

The Bishop presents his view as to the teaching of children in relation to Bible history. "In view of this change, which, I believe, is near at hand, and in order to avert the shock, which our children's faith must otherwise experience, when they find, as they certainly will before long, that the Bible can no longer be regarded as infallibly true in matters of common history, as we value their reverence and love for the Sacred Book,—let us teach them at once to know that they are not to look for the inspiration of the Holy One, which breathes through its pages, in respect of any such matters as these, which the writers wrote as men, with the same liability to error from any cause as other men, and where they must be judged as men, as all other writers would be, by the just laws of criticism.

"Let us rather teach them to look for the sign of God's Spirit, speaking to them in the Bible, in that of which their own hearts alone can be the judges, of which the heart of the simple child can judge as well—often, alas, better than—that of the self-willed philosopher, critic, or sage,—in that which speaks to the witness for God within them, to which alone, under God Himself, whose voice it utters in the secrets of his inner being, each man is ultimately responsible,—to the Reason and Conscience. Let us bid them look for it in that, within the Bible, which tells them of what is pure and good, holy and loving, faithful and true, which speaks from God's Spirit directly to their spirits, though clothed with the outward form of a law, or parable, or proverb, or narrative, in that which they will feel and know in themselves to be righteous and excellent, however they may perversely choose the base and evil—in that which makes the living man leap up, as it were, in the strength of sure conviction, which no arguments could bring, no dogmas of church or council enforce, saying, as the Scripture words are uttered, which answers to the Voice of Truth within, "These words are God's—not the flesh, the outward matter, the mere letter, but the inward core and meaning of them,—for they are spirit, they are life."

The Bishop presents encouragement to those whom his book will have a tendency to disturb. "But there will be others of a different stamp,—meek, lowly, loving souls, who are walking daily with God, and have been taught to consider a belief in the historical veracity of the story of the Exodus an essential part of their religion, upon which, indeed, as it seems to them, the whole fabric of their faith and hope in God is based. It is not really so: the light of God's love did not shine less truly on pious minds, when Enoch "walked with God" of old, though there was then no Bible in existence, than it does now. And it is perhaps, God's Will that we shall be taught in this our day, among other precious lessons, not to build up our faith upon a Book, though it be the Bible itself, but to realise more fully the blessedness of knowing that he himself, the living God our Father and Friend, is nearer and closer to us than any book can be,—that His voice within the heart may be heard continually by the obedient child that listens for it, and *that* shall be our Teacher and Guide, in the path of duty, which is the path of life, when all other helpers—even the words of the Best of Books—may fail us.

Our belief in the living God remains as sure as ever, though not the Pentateuch only, but the whole Bible were removed. It is written on our hearts by God's own finger, as surely as by the hand of the apostle in the Bible, that "God is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." It is written there also, as plainly as in the Bible, that "God is not mocked," that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, and that "he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption."

The Bishop gives his reason why he publishes his book. This con-

viction, which I have arrived at, of the *certainty* of the ground on which the *main* argument of my book rests—(viz: the proof that the account of the Exodus, whatever value it may have, *is not historically true*)—must be my excuse to the reader for the manner in which I have conducted the inquiry. A friend, to whom I had submitted the work, before I had decided to publish it, was afraid that I might give offence by stating too plainly at the outset the end which I had in view. He thought then—though now approving fully of the course which I am taking—that such an open declaration of the sum and substance of my work "might tend to prejudice the reader, and probably make him more inclined to become hardened against the force of the arguments." And he suggested that I might do more wisely to conceal, as it were, my purpose for a time, and lead the reader gradually on, till he "would arrive of himself, almost unawares," at the same conclusions as my own. But, however judicious for a merely rhetorical purpose such a course might have been, I could not allow myself to adopt it here, in a matter where such very important consequences are involved. I *must* state the case plainly and fully from the first. I do not wish to take the reader by surprise, or to entrap him by guile. I wish him to go forward with his eyes open, and to watch carefully every step of the argument, with a full consciousness of the momentous results to which it leads, and with a determination to test *severely*, and with all the power and skill he can bring to the work, but yet to test *honestly* and *fairly*, the truth of every inference which I have drawn, and every conclusion to which I have arrived.

The Bishop's resignation as to the consequences of publishing his book. "To attempt to sweep back the tide which is rising at our very doors. This is assuredly no time for such trifling. Instead of trying to do this, or to throw up sandbanks, which may serve for the present moment to hide from our view the swelling waters, it is plainly our duty before God and man to see that the foundations of our faith are sound, and deeply laid in the very truth itself.

"But God's will must be done. The law of truth must be obeyed. I shall await your reply before I take any course which may commit me in so serious a matter. And I feel that I shall do right to take time for careful deliberation. Should my difficulties not be removed, I shall, if God will, come to England, and there again consult some of my friends. But then, if the step must be taken, in God's name I must take it; and He himself will provide for me future work on earth of some kind or other, if he has work for me to do."

This remarkable book, which there is every reason in believing is the product of a devout and earnest spirit, must create considerably more interest and excitement than the famous "Essays and Reviews." It is not, the Bishop intimates, that figures and computations given throughout the Old Testament confute themselves when they are conceivable, and are demonstrably impossible when they are imaginative. But it is this—and this is the conviction of a Bishop who avows the

deepest reverence for the sacred volume, and whose service to the truth which God loves, and will have from His worshippers, is paid with prayer and pain—it is that throughout the Jewish history, and notably up and down the section ascribed to Moses, he encounters signs which prove to him that the Pentateuch is such a composition as that of Zoroaster, Menu, or Confucius (only higher in scope, wisdom, and the "gift of God";) or that the Almighty has "absolutely inspired" blunders, and sealed the errors of a human pen for his own awful veracities.

And what now will be the result of this book? Surely true religion need fear no contact with reason and science? Shall we have lost the precious aid and hope of the scriptures, if we find that, written, transcribed, printed and translated, by the finger of man, they bear the soil of the dust of which he is compounded? A thousand times, no! while one text out of the many, one lesson of their varied and divine teachings, remains to convince us of God, while we simply hear or read them, the Bible is the Bible. While revelations so sublime and pitiful as that prayer, which free of doctrine, free of assertion, bids all men call God "Father"—while such a compendium of codes Divine and human as the "Good Master" gave to "one who came unto him"—while ethics so perfect, so sufficient, so self-comprised as those contained in the sermon on the Mount, are in it, the Bible is the Bible, and will remain to us the savour of life unto life.

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